

Awesome God #2

By Bill Denton

INTRODUCTION

A. Illustration

When Albert Einstein was asked if he believed in God, here was his response:

"I'm not an atheist. I don't think I can call myself a pantheist. The problem involved is too vast for our limited minds. We are in the position of a little child entering a huge library filled with books in many languages. The child knows someone must have written those books. It does not know how. It does not understand the languages in which they are written. The child dimly suspects a mysterious order in the arrangement of the books, but doesn't know what it is.

That, it seems to me, is the attitude of even the most intelligent human being toward God. We see the universe marvelously arranged and obeying certain laws, but only dimly understand these laws."

Einstein . . . composed a credo, "What I Believe," that he recorded for a human-rights group and later published. It concluded with an explanation of what he meant when he called himself religious: "The most beautiful emotion we can experience is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion that stands at the cradle of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead, a snuffed-out candle. To sense that behind anything that can be experienced there is something that our minds cannot grasp, whose beauty and sublimity reaches us only indirectly: this is religiousness. In this sense, and in this sense only, I am a devoutly religious man."

Walter Isaacson, "Einstein and Faith," TIME (4-5-07);

1. One might find in there some things to question regarding Einstein's personal faith, but you have to give this great scientist credit for one thing: he understood that God is bigger than anything that fit inside his own mind
2. Albert Einstein thought God was awesome!

B. Last week, we focused on the uniqueness of God

1. Isaiah 45:5 -- "I am the Lord, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God. . . ." NASU
2. Paul said that we can know God through the creation (Rom 1:20)
 - a. we can know that God has eternal power – greater than all the power contained in the universe itself
 - b. we can know that God has a divine nature – he transcends the creation and is not, himself, a part of it
3. These are grand truths that ought to cause us to marvel at the thought of God
 - a. Psalms 19:1 -- 19 The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. NASU
 - b. as the song goes, "Our God is an awesome God"

I. THE NATURE OF GOD IS AWESOME

A. John 4:24 -- 24 "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." NASU

1. That which is spirit is not that which is physical or material
 - a. Deuteronomy 4:15-19 (you cannot represent God with the physical)
15 "So watch yourselves carefully, since you did not see any form on the day the Lord spoke to you at Horeb from the midst of the fire, 16 so that you do not act corruptly and make a graven image for yourselves in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female, 17 the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the sky, 18 the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water below the earth. 19 "And beware not to lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be drawn away and worship them and serve them, those which the Lord your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven. NASU
 - b. John 1:18 (only Jesus has ever shown us what the Father is like)
18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him. NASU
2. The fact that God is not the same as anything in our physical, material universe ought to be a source of awe to us

B. Theologian Stephen Charnock made eight observations about the fact that God is Spirit and not flesh

1. If God were not a spirit, he could not be creator
2. If God were not a spirit, he could not be one
3. If God had a body, he would not be invisible
4. If God were not Spirit, he would not be infinite
5. If God were not Spirit, he could not be an independent being
6. If God were not Spirit, he would not be unchangeable
7. If God were not Spirit, he could not be omnipresent
8. If God were not Spirit, he could not be perfect

C. Each of those eight observations focuses on a vital truth about God, and every one of those truths states something about God's nature that is completely unlike anything that is part of the created order – and we ought to stand amazed at such a God

II. GOD'S CHARACTERISTICS ARE AWESOME

A. Genesis 17:1 (God is omnipotent)

17 Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. NASU

1. "God Almighty" is the God of all power or might – omnipotent
2. We mentioned this characteristic last week with the observation that there are many powerful things that awe and astound us, but you can wrap up all the power in the entire universe and you still don't have anything equal to God
3. People who understand this, and who know they are on God's side, protected by God's power, and provisioned by God's power are a people at ease
4. Anybody can thumb his nose at God, but that doesn't mean he's somebody – compared to God, he's a nothing

B. Psalms 139:1-6 (God is omniscient)

139 O Lord, You have searched me and known me. 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. 3 You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O Lord, You know it all. 5 You have enclosed me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it. NASU

1. To understand a human being is a task beyond any human being
2. This is but one example of God's knowledge and wisdom – and why not? Since God created all that exists, we should expect God to know and understand completely
3. The person who learns that God is omniscient can stop worrying that God will somehow make a mistake, or do something wrong

C. Psalms 139:7-12 (God is omnipresent)

7 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. 9 If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, 10 Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me. 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, And the light around me will be night," 12 Even the darkness is not dark to You, And the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You. NASU

1. There is no place to go to get away from God – a truth often ignored / rejected
2. This is either a source of great fear or great comfort, depending on whether you want God with you or not
3. An all powerful, ever present, all knowing God is awesome!

III. KNOWING THESE THINGS CAN REVOLUTIONIZE YOUR LIFE

A. Psalms 139:23-24

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; 24 And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way. NASU

1. David's is the only legitimate response we can make to such a God
2. But this is precisely why the apostle Paul identified the basic, fundamental mistake we humans make about God

a. Romans 1:18-23

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. NASU

- b. when man puts God out of his mind, and rejects who and what God is, the result is devastating

B. The opposite is also true – if we make the effort to put the truths about God into our minds, then and only then, are we able to walk the right path of life

1. Some people treat God as if he is unimportant, insignificant, and trivial
2. Some people completely eliminate God from any meaningful role in life
3. Some Christians are so determined to live by their own rules and standards that have fooled themselves with a god of their own imagination
4. Some people have little, if any, fear of God because in their minds, there is really nothing to be afraid of
5. Some people are more interested in meeting the human expectations around them than they are the divine expectations of God

CONCLUSION

A. You need to know what kind of God you believe in

B. Invitation